GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DEFENCE
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:174
ANSWERED ON:29.11.2001
TELEPHONE FACILITY IN SIACHEN
SAMUDRALA VENUGOPAL CHARY

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that lack of telephone facility in Siachen, is causing considerable distress to the troops as they remain cut off; and

(b) if so, the action taken for immediate restoration of telephone by BSNL?

Answer

MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES)

(a) & (b): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) & (b) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 174 FOR 29.11.2001

For the welfare of the troops in Siachen Glaciers, Army have arranged STDPCOs of Department of Telecommunication at the following places:-

(a) Siachen 1

(b) Chalunka Post 1

(c) Thoise 1

(d) Khalsar 1

(e) Paratapur 3

2. Department of Telecommunication have subsidized the call charges applicable to all STD PCOs run by the Army in Leh, Nobra and Kargil Sectors which includes Siachen.As a result, only 25% of the actual charges are being paid by the users for all STD calls and ISD calls (to Nepal only).

3. Two normal STD telephones were functioning in HQ 102 Mountain Brigade.Since these did not fall in the category of STDPCOs, the concessional tariffs were not applicable and the users were required to pay the actual STD charges.Hence, the two telephones were surrendered in June 2001. In lieu of the surrendered STD telephones, two STDPCOs with concessional tariff have been provided at Paratapur. The total number of STD PCOs at Paratapur now is three.

4. With the existing arrangement there is no complaint from soldiers regarding communication facilities provided to them.